
President Obama has announced that he will not be removing or reducing troop numbers in Afghanistan. However it is not clear if he intends to increase the number of troops either, as the top general in Afghanistan wants. Mark Mardell reports from Washington:

The President is making it clear that leaving Afghanistan **is not an option, it's not on the table. According to one White House source**, he told the meeting that he wouldn't **shrink** the number of troops in Afghanistan or **opt for a strategy of merely targeting al-Qaeda leaders**. But he **wouldn't be drawn** on the military request for more troops.

There appears to be a frustration that the review of strategy has sometimes been portrayed in **black-and-white terms** of a massive increase or reduction of troop numbers.

President Obama told the group **made up of** the most senior Republican and Democrat senators and congressmen that his assessment would be "**rigorous and deliberate**". But it's going on too long for some Republicans and members of the President's own party are **dubious about committing more resources and military personnel** to a conflict where there is **no end in sight**. The word 'Vietnam' is heard more and more on Capitol Hill.

The President was certainly right when he said his final decision wouldn't make everyone in the room, or the country, happy.

Mark Mardell, BBC News, Washington

Vocabulary and definitions

is not an option, it's not on the table	is not going to be discussed or considered
according to one White House source	as stated by someone who works inside the government and has government information
shrink	decrease or make smaller
opt for a strategy of merely targeting al Qaeda leaders	decide to follow a plan of directing their attention only to the people controlling al Qaeda
wouldn't be drawn	refused to be persuaded to discuss or reveal his plans
black-and-white terms	simple concepts which are easy to understand
made up of	consisting of
rigorous and deliberate	carefully considered
dubious about committing more resources and military personnel	doubtful of promising money, soldiers and time
no end in sight	it doesn't seem possible that there will be a solution or outcome to the situation in the near future

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